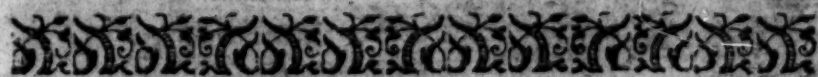


Unto the REVEREND,

The MINISTERS of the several *Kirks*
and *Congregations* of the City of
Edinburgh, City of

The earnest REQUEST and
most humble PETITION
of the Heads of FAMILIES,
and others, their respective
Parishioners.







*Unto the Reverend, the MINISTERS
of the several Kirks and Congrega-
tions of the City of Edinburgh,*

The earnest REQUEST, and most
humble PETITION of the Heads
of Families, and others, their re-
spective Parishioners.

SHEWETH,

THAT we the true and sincere Mem-
bers in this City, of the true Doctrine
and Discipline of the *Presbyterian*
Church Government, as instituted by our BLES-
SED SAVIOUR, and established by the Laws of
the Land, and confirmed by many Acts of Par-
liament, ever since the happy and glorious Re-
volution,

velution, are deeply grieved and afflicted with the Want of your Spiritual Comfort and Instruction in this our great Need and Necessity; and are not a little concerned and surpris'd that you, our dear Shepherds, should desert and abandon us, your loving Flocks, to stray and wander, destitute of our Pastors.

You know how frequently, and how justly, you have exhorted and admonish'd us to attend on the blessed Ordinances, and Worship of GOD: And will you yourselves forbear to preach the glad Tidings of the Gospel to a People, who are most willing to hear, and most desirous to attend? You have often inculcated and inforced the Doctrine and Position, That we ought not either deny, dissemble, or forbear to own our BLESSED SAVIOUR in the worst of Times, and amidst the hottest Persecutions; and that you, our spiritual Guides, are oblig'd, like the holy Apostles, to preach in Season and out of Season, in the most perilous Times, and, upon no earthly Consideration, to be guilty of sinful Silence.

But now, what makes our Grief and Concern the more intollerable and surpris'g, is, that in the present Case (Glory be to GOD) neither you nor we have hitherto met with any Manner of Persecution or Hinderance from
our

our publick Worship; but on the contrary, full Assurances are given to us of a Toleration and Protection; nay, which is attended with a kind Invitation, by Proclamation from the Cross, and by other publick Papers emitted by the Authority of the *Prince*, now Regent. And what makes this your Conduct the more to be blamed and the less excusable, that you and we are promised not only presently the Enjoyment and Protection of the free Exercise of our Religion, but we have likewise full Assurances of the Establishment and Confirmation of it for the future, in as plain Words as can be either asked or devised: After this, how can you either justify, or the World excuse your Proceedings?

If you say, We must not, we ought not to trust to these Promises. Pray, our dearest Pastors, what other Security have we ever had of our Civil and Religious Rights, except Promises, Oaths, and Acts of Parliament? The first two the *Prince* has, of his own proper Accord and Motive, unasked, unrequired, given you frankly and voluntarily; and the last he has promised to fulfil and establish, as he shall answer to Almighty GOD, upon the Faith of a *Christian*, and the Honour of a *Prince*: But if, after all, you will not trust to his Veracity for the future, why do you not
try

try his Sincerity for Enjoyment of the Exercise of our Religion for the present?

If you say further, That you had the same Assurances from his Grandfather, which he did most openly and illegally violate and transgress; you know, Reverend Gentlemen, that we have little to reproach him with on that Head; he, a *Papist*, promised to maintain the *Protestant* Religion, and endeavoured to subvert it, we *Presbyterians* accepted a *Toleration* from him, tho' well apprised that it was designed chiefly in Favours of the Popish Dissenters, and promised, with thankful Hearts, and most grateful Acknowledgments, that we would maintain and defend him against all Attempts whatsoever, in his just Rights and Prerogatives, with our Lives and Fortunes, notwithstanding of his being an open and professed *Papist*: And this we did, in Conformity to the 23d Chapter of our *Confession of Faith*. And yet, behold, the very next Year, we conspired against him, and soon after withdrew our Allegiance from him, turned him off, forfeited and banished him, on the very Account of his Difference from us in Religion, and have ever since been aiding and assisting in making Acts to exclude all Princes of that Religion, how nearly soever related in Blood, from being our Kings or Governors.

But

But, whatever Miscarriages were committed in the Reign of King *James VII.* and every one knows they were too great and too many, has not his Family made a sufficient Atonement for them these Fifty seven Years past? And you have taught us, and we believe it, because it is the Promise of **GOD** Himself, He does not always, nor will for ever visit the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children.

Besides, it is not to be supposed, if his Posterity are Men of Consideration and Sense, which we ourselves, with their greatest Enemies, must allow them to be, will ever venture to split upon the same Rock, for the same Reasons they have so dearly and so long paid for, and thereby lose once more three Crowns, and three potent Kingdoms, and be again, they and theirs (never to be trusted any more) reduced, in Exile and Banishment, to live upon the aukward and precarious Generosity of foreign Princes Abroad, hated and despised by their native Subjects at Home.

But forgive us, our dear Ministers, to add yet a further Consideration for your returning to your Pastoral Charge, and the Flocks committed to your Care; we the *Presbyterians* in *Scotland*, by dethroning of the Father, and banishing

banishing the Son in his Infancy, were the Instruments and Occasion of his being bred in the Principles and Tenets of the *Romish* Religion, in Countries and Places where he had no Opportunities nor Access to know better Things: Let us, by your Instructions and your Examples, endeavour, by all possible Means, to gain and disabuse him from the Prejudices of Education, and his Ignorance of the Principles of our holy and reformed Religion, if ever it should happen to be the Will and Pleasure of GOD that he should reign over us; and it is hoped, that it will be no very difficult Task to accomplish, if we may judge of the Father by the Education he has given to the Son, the PRINCE who is amongst us, and the free and familiar Conversation he has had with his *Protestant* Subjects even at *Rome*, and who were even there, from his Infancy, his greatest Favourites and Companions.

Forgive us, dear Reverend Gentlemen, to expostulate yet a little further with you upon the sinful Effects of your deserting your Charge, on two very sad and deplorable Accounts; the *first* is, the manifest and universal Breach of the holy *Sabbath* of the LORD, by a great Number of your Parishioners strolling and straying through the Streets, or in the Country, having

ing no Regard or Opportunity to keep the *Sabbath* Day holy, for lack of an Opportunity to attend, in their respective Congregations, GOD's holy Worship: Consider the griveous Sins and untimely Ends that the Breach of that holy Day brings, by Degrees, many poor, and, at first, well meaning People to at last. Alas! to whose Door are these fatal Consequences to be laid? Who are the Occasion of them? Who encourages, and who refrains them? If well disposed Persons will read, pray, and do Exercise in their own Families, without the Help of a lawful Minister, Is not this leading such Persons into the Principles and Practice of Independency, and Contempt or Neglect of spiritual Guides, and Ministers lawfully ordained and set apart for the Ministry of GOD's holy Word?

Again, if well meaning and disposed Persons will choose, rather than sit at Home, to join in Worship with *Episcopal* Congregations in *Edinburgh*, Will not this, by Degrees, increase the Number of their Hearers, and, by Degrees, diminish the Number of your Audience, and alienate their Hearts?

Let us add yet another Consideration, touching the bad Effects of your deserting your Churches; with Relation to the Poor, you

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know

know the principal Fund, by which the numerous Poor of this City are supported and maintained, is the Collections which are gathered at the Church-doors; and as there are no Preachings, so there can be no Collections, consequently the Poor must either starve, or be turned out of the Hospital. What a shameful Thing would this appear to be in the Eyes of your Friends, as well as of your Enemies, and how sinful before GOD and Man? The only Atonement you can possibly make on this Article, is, that forthwith, all and every of you, do appropriate and assign weekly, since you desisted from preaching, and during that Period, while you continue so to do, so much of your Stipends as will make up the Charities commonly collected formerly at the Church-doors; and this is no more than what you are obliged to do, by the Ties of common Justice, as well as by those of common Charity and Compassion.

Again, With what Justice do you and we cry out against the Non-preaching, and Non-residence of the Clergy of *England*? And will you indulge yourselves from Picque or Policy in the same Fault that they commit from Laziness or Gain?

Once

Once more, the Church cannot be without Shepherds and Pastors, no more than a Monarchical Throne can be without a King ; And shall the last be turned off for abdicating his Subjects and Realms ? And shall the other abdicate their Kirks and Congregations with Impunity ? Let us ask you, in this Case, Have not the Christian People Power to declare your Churches vacant, and to call others willing to serve your Cures, and fill up your places ? And will not they, thereby, be lawfully intitled to your Emoluments and Stipends ?

Upon the whole, What are you afraid of ? If you have a Scruple to pray for King *James*, and afraid to pray for King *George* by Name, even pray for all Christian Kings, Princes, and Governours, and especially our own true and lawful Sovereign ? But you will say, there are Forms required by the Law, by which you are required to pray, *Nominatim*, for the King and Royal Family, and it would be very dangerous and undecent to transgress it. But why not *supersede* that Law as well as you very lately *dispensed* with an express Act of Parliament, in raising without that Authority, and arming his Majesty's Subjects ?
And

And content yourselves, which will entirely satisfy your Hearers with the above Form.

To conclude, Dear and worthy Pastors, we are hopeful, nay are confident, that our earnest Prayers and the strong Reasons, we offer, will prevail upon you to return speedily to the wandering Flocks of your respective Congregations, to be our spiritual Guides and Comforters, in these perilous Times and woful Divisions amongst us. And that you will resist for the future, the Influences of great and Ministerial Men over you, and banish from your Breasts all Picques, Politicks, private Views, and worldly Wisdom; and study only the Salvation of our Souls and the Simplicity of the Gospel.

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REV^d J. BERRIDGE, M.A.
Vicar of Everton Bedfordshire.
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